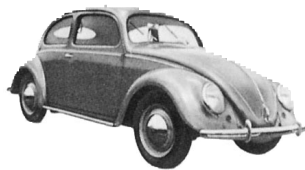


## HOW TO TELL THE AGE OF A VOLKSWAGEN

The only certain way of identifying the year of a particular VW 1200 sedan is to check the chassis number of the car in question and to compare it with the chassis numbers listed below. Until 1955, the Volkswagenwerk did not have any “model year.” Before that, a 1953 VW was simply one which was produced between January 1, 1953 and December 31, 1953. Since 1955, model years begin on August 1.

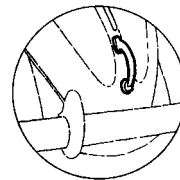
What makes identification doubly difficult is that improvements (both exterior and interior) often were made midway in production. The absence of the Wolfsburg crest on the VW’s front hood is the only exterior change which sets a 1963 VW apart from a 1962 model. But this modification wasn’t made until November, three months after 1963 production began on August 1.

### BASIC CHANGES



**1949**

**Chassis Numbers:**  
91 922–138 554



1. License plate indentation on rear deck dropped.
2. Inside pull cable release for front hood; no lock on hood handle

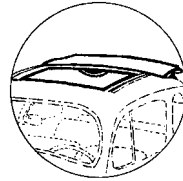
2 / SMALL WONDER

3. Solex carburetor introduced as standard equipment
4. Dashboard redesigned
5. Starting crank hole dropped (VWs previously could be started by both key and hand-crank)

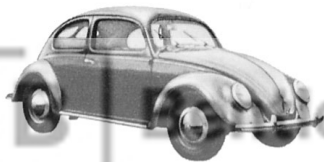


**1950**

**Chassis Numbers:**  
138 555–220 471

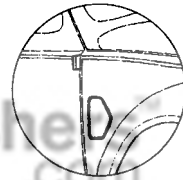


1. Hydraulic brakes introduced; formerly mechanical brakes
2. Sunroof introduced
3. Noise mufflers for heating ducts added
4. Automatic air cooling by thermostatically controlled throttle ring
5. Fuel mixture heating device (heat riser) introduced



**1951**

**Chassis Numbers:**  
220 472–313 829

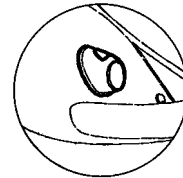


1. Chrome garnish mold added to windshield
2. Wolfsburg crest added to front hood above hood handle
3. Vent flaps added to front-quarter body panels



**1952**

**Chassis Numbers:**  
313 830–428 156



1. Glass vent windows added; vent flaps in front-quarter body panels discontinued
2. Heating control by rotary knob; formerly pull-knob
3. "T" type rear hood handle introduced; formerly loop-type
4. Two brake- and taillights; formerly one brake- and stoplight in

center of rear hood

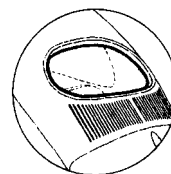
5. Window crank makes 3 1/2 turns; formerly 10 1/2 turns
6. Glove compartment gets door; formerly open bin
7. Turn signal control moved to steering wheel from dashboard
8. 5.60 x 15 inch tires replace 5.00 x 16 tires
9. 2nd, 3rd, and 4th gears synchronized; formerly crashbox



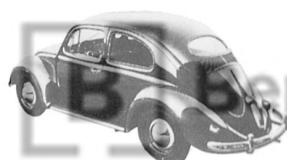
**1953**

**Chassis Numbers:**

428 157-575 414



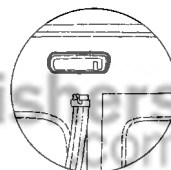
1. Oval, one-piece rear window replaces split window
2. Lock button added to vent-window handles
3. Brake-fluid reservoir relocated behind spare tire; formerly at master cylinder



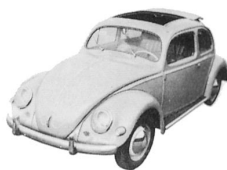
**1954**

**Chassis Numbers:**

575 415-722 934



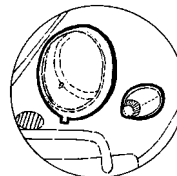
1. Starter now incorporated with ignition switch; formerly separate button on dashboard
2. Bigger, more powerful engine, hp increased from 30 hp (1131 cc) to 36 hp (1192 cc); 5:8:1 to 6:6:1 compression ratio
3. Oil-bath air cleaner introduced; formerly felt-element filter
4. Break-in driving requirement dropped for engine
5. Automatic three-way courtesy light added
6. Top window in taillight housing dropped



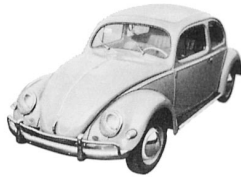
**1955**

**Chassis Numbers:**

722 935-929 745

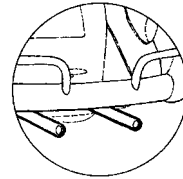


1. Flashing directional indicators mounted low on front fenders  
replace the semaphore “idiot stick” turn indicators

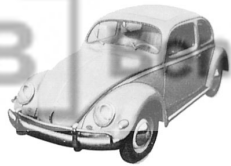


**1956**

**Chassis Numbers:**  
**929 746–1 246 618**

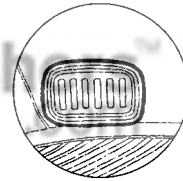


1. Chromed dual tailpipes added; formerly single tailpipe
2. Taillight housings moved 2 inches higher on fenders
3. Bumper overrider “bows” added
4. Sunroof made of plastic fabric; formerly cloth fabric
5. Steering-wheel diameter spoke (horizontal) moved lower, off-center
6. Heater knob moved forward; formerly located in back of front seats
7. Front seat backs now adjustable; formerly non-adjustable
8. Redesigned gas tank yields larger luggage space



**1957**

**Chassis Numbers:**  
**1 246 619–1 600 439**

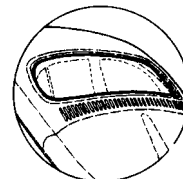


1. Tubeless tires replace tube-type tires
2. Adjustable striker plates fitted to doors
3. Front heater outlets moved back to within 5 inches of door for better heat distribution



**1958**

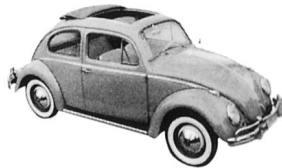
**Chassis Numbers:**  
**1 600 440–2 007 615**



1. Brake drums and shoes widened for faster, surer stops
2. Rear window and windshield enlarged



3. Front turn-signal lights moved to top of fender
4. Radio grille moved left, in front of driver
5. Flat accelerator pedal introduced; formerly a roller type



**1959**

**Chassis Numbers:**  
2 007 616–2 528 667

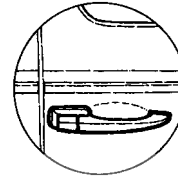


1. Stronger clutch springs
2. Improved fan belt design
3. Frame reinforced for greater strength



**1960**

**Chassis Numbers:**  
2 528 668–3 192 506

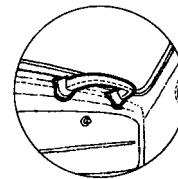


1. Steering wheel “dished” for safety
2. Door handles become grab handles with pushbuttons; formerly pull-out lever type
3. Padded sun-visor; formerly transparent plastic
4. Anti-sway bar added for improved cornering, handling
5. Generator output increased from 160 to 180 watts
6. Steering damper added for improved handling
7. Footrest added for front-seat passenger
8. Seat back contoured for greater comfort, reduced driver fatigue



**1961**

**Chassis Numbers:**  
3 192 507–4 010 994



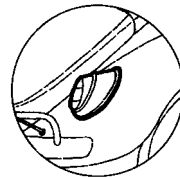
1. Sun visor and grab handle provided for passenger's side
2. Increased horsepower; from 36 to 40 hp

3. Automatic choke and preheater introduced
4. Transmission synchronized in all forward speeds
5. Flatter gas tank yields increased luggage space
6. "Quick-check" transparent brake fluid reservoir
7. Push-on connectors fitted throughout electrical system
8. Pump-type windshield washer
9. Non-repeat starter switch
10. Key slot in doors changed from vertical to horizontal



**1962**

Chassis Numbers:  
4 010 995-4 846 835

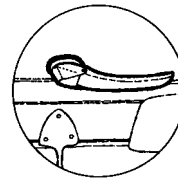


1. Spring-loaded hood
2. Larger taillights
3. Sliding covers on heat outlets
4. Compressed-air windshield washer
5. Seat-belt mounting points added
6. Gas gauge; formerly reserve fuel tap
7. Worm and roller steering improves handling; formerly worm and sector
8. Permanently lubricated tie-rod ends



**1963**

Chassis Numbers:  
4 846 836-5 677 118

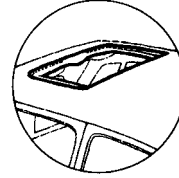


1. Leatherette headliner introduced
2. Wolfsburg hood crest dropped
3. Folding handle for sunroof added
4. Foam-insulated floors
5. Fresh-air heating
6. Nylon window guides

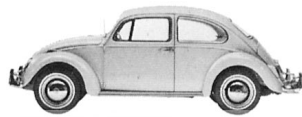


**1964**

**Chassis Numbers:**  
5 677 119-6 502 399

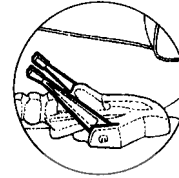


1. Sliding metal sunroof replaces cloth roof, making car "theftproof"
2. Sunroof crank improvement
3. Horn operated by thumb bar instead of ring
4. Aerated vinyl material replaces nonporous leatherette seat upholstery
5. Four new colors introduced: Panama Beige, Java Green (dark green), Bahama Blue (light blue) and Sea Blue (same as 1963 Karmann Ghia). Black, Pearl White, Anthracite and Ruby Red continued.



**1965**

**Chassis Numbers:**  
115 000 001-  
115 979 200



1. Significant increases in window area: windshield increased 11% and slightly curved; door window, 6%, rear side windows, 17.5%; rear window, 19.5%
2. Windshield wipers improved: blades longer and more efficient; more powerful electric motor added; blades park to left instead of right, wiping glass in front of driver
3. Slight thinning of backs of front bucket seats provides additional legroom for rear-seat passengers
4. Contouring of backrests of front bucket seats for additional comfort
5. Rear seat backrest now folds down nearly flat onto rear seat cushion, allowing rear compartment to be used as luggage space as in a station wagon
6. Improved braking system: brake master cylinder and brake-shoe supports on backing plates redesigned, reducing lining wear, improving braking, and reducing pressure needed on pedal
7. Control knob for heating system replaced by two levers near parking brake handle, one for front compartment and the other controlling heat entering rear seat compartment

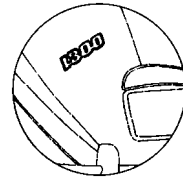
8. Four thermostatically operated flaps added to engine's fan housing now permit air to flow through car's heater and defroster ducts as soon as engine is started
9. Engine compartment turn-handle eliminated and replaced by push-button device
10. Swivel mounted sun visors



**1966**

**Chassis Numbers:**

116 000 001–  
116 1 021 298



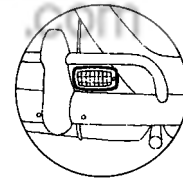
1. Horsepower increased from 40 to 50 and displacement from 1200 cc to 1300 cc; number 1300 on engine lid
2. Ventilating slots in wheels; flat hub caps
3. Safety latches for front seat backrests
4. Emergency blinker switch
5. Headlight dimmer switch mounted on turn signal lever
6. Center dashboard defroster outlet
7. Semi-circular horn ring



**1967**

**Chassis Numbers:**

117 000 001–  
117 844 892



1. Horsepower increased from 50 to 53 and displacement from 1300 cc to 1500 cc
2. Glass cover over sealed-beam headlights eliminated; single-unit headlights with chrome rim; fender indented
3. Dual brake system; front/rear operate independently
4. Volkswagen nameplate on engine lid
5. Two-speed windshield wipers
6. Back-up lights
7. Engine lid redesigned for vertical mounting of license plate
8. Parking light incorporated into front turn signals

- 9. Locking buttons on doors
- 10. 12-volt electrical system (36-amp battery)

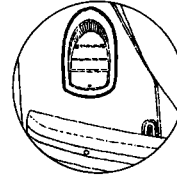


**1968**

**Chassis Numbers:**

118 000 000–

118 1 016 098



- 1. One-piece bumpers; bows and overriders eliminated; bumper height raised
- 2. Head restraints combined with front seat backrests
- 3. Automatic Stick Shift (optional) introduced
- 4. External gas tank filler, spring-loaded flap
- 5. Front hood air intake louver; push-button front hood catch
- 6. Fresh-air ventilating system
- 7. Collapsible steering column
- 8. Exhaust emission control system
- 9. Flattened door handles with built-in trigger release
- 10. Back-up/brake lights and rear turn signals in single housing
- 11. Certification sticker on door post that vehicle meets federal safety standards

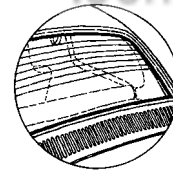


**1969**

**Chassis Numbers:**

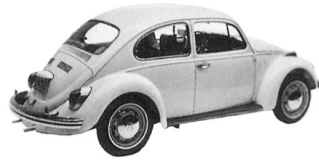
119 000 001–

119 1 093 704



- 1. Rear window defogger and defroster; electric heating wires on inner surface of glass
- 2. Double-jointed rear axle for improved ride and handling
- 3. Warning lights in speedometer identified by letters or symbols
- 4. Ignition lock is combined with a locking device for the steering wheel
- 5. Gas tank filler neck flap has lock, with release under the right side of the dash panel
- 6. Front hood release relocated in glove compartment
- 7. Day/night rear-view mirror

8. Warm-air outlets at base of the doors moved rearward; remote control knobs on door columns

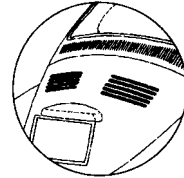


1970

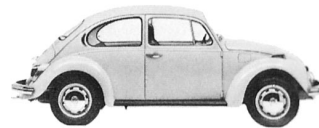
Chassis Numbers:

11 0 2000001-

11 0 3096945



1. Air intake slots on engine lid
2. Increased horsepower (from 53 to 57) and displacement (from 1500 cc to 1600 cc)
3. Enlarged front turn signals (combined with side marker lights)
4. Reflectors mounted on rear bumper
5. Side reflectors built into taillight housing
6. Tenths-of-mile indicator on odometer (also appears on late '69 models)
7. Head restraints reduced in size
8. Buzzer sounds when door is opened and key is left in ignition
9. Remote control knobs for warm-air outlets discontinued
10. Lock on glove compartment door

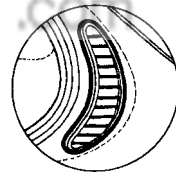


1971

Chassis Numbers:

111 2 000001-

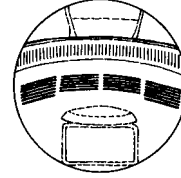
111 3 143118



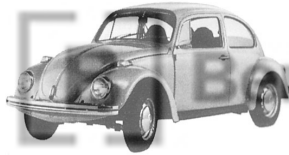
1. Increased horsepower, from 57 to 60
2. Flow-through ventilation with exhaust ports behind rear side windows
3. Headlights automatically go off and parking lights stay on when ignition is turned off
4. Larger taillights



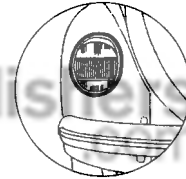
**1972**  
**Chassis Numbers:**  
 112 2 000001–  
 112 2 961362



1. Larger rear window
2. Air intake slots on engine compartment increased from two to four
3. Smoother engine warm-up after cold-weather start
4. New safety steering wheel with collapsible hub
5. Lever mounted steering column for fingertip control of both windshield wiper and washer
6. Hinged parcel shelf to cover rear-end luggage well
7. Restyled and easier-to-read speedometer
8. Automatic electronic check of dual brake system warning light each time the engine starts
9. VW Computer Analysis socket



**1973**  
**Chassis Numbers:**  
 113 2 000 001–  
 113 3 021 954



**Type 113 Chassis Numbers: 133 2 000 001–113 3 021 860**

1. Large, circular taillight complex combining stop light, turn signal, tail and backup lights
2. Stronger bumpers add an inch to overall length
3. Front seats adjustable to any of 77 different positions
4. More durable, easier-to-operate clutch; softer transmission mounting
5. Improved intake air pre-heating for faster cold-weather starts
6. Windshield wiper arms have black finish
7. Inertia-reel safety belts
8. 6.00 x 15 tires with 4 1/2 inch wide wheels

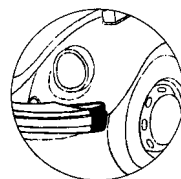


**1974**

**Chassis Numbers:**

**114 2 000 001–**

**114 2 818 456**



**Type 113 Chassis Numbers: 134 2 000 001–134 2 798 165**

1. Self-restoring, energy-absorbing front and rear bumpers
2. Ignition interlock prevents engine from being started before safety belts are fastened
3. New cylinder head alloy for better heat dissipation
4. Additional Computer Analysis sensor reads ignition timing and top dead center
5. Front seat headrests redesigned and made slightly smaller
6. Steering wheel made more elastic to “give” more in the event of an accident
7. “Park” position for Automatic Stick Shift
8. Warning light for hand brake

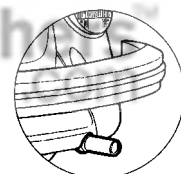


**1975**

**Chassis Numbers:**

**115 2 000 001–**

**115 2 267 815**



**Type 113 Chassis Numbers: 135 2 000 001–135 2 267 815**

1. Electronic fuel injection, with “fuel injection” insignia on rear deck lid
2. Single tailpipe
3. Increased horsepower; 48 hp, up from 46 (SAE net)
4. Clutch pedal pressure eased
5. Larger exhaust valve stems for better heat transfer
6. New heat exchangers for greater heater output
7. Installation of battery ground cable with diagnosis contact for more accurate computer analysis readings
8. Odometer triggers red warning light “EGR” in speedometer to



- notify driver of service requirements
9. California models with catalytic converter require lead-free gasoline; fuel filler neck has smaller opening for nozzle
  10. Maintenance intervals extended to 15,000 miles

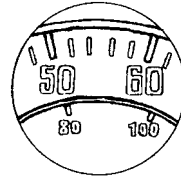


**1976**

**Chassis Numbers:**

116 2 000 001–

116 2 176 287



**1976 Beetle Convertible Chassis Numbers: 156 2 000 001–  
156 2 175 675**

1. Beetle has plush appearance with many luxury “extras” as standard equipment: two-coat metallic paint (Silver Metallic, Lime Green, Topaz Metallic); full carpeting; sports-style wheel rims; rear window defogger
2. New speedometer with outer scale in miles per hour and inner scale in kilometers per hour (on most '76 models)
3. Redesigned front seats with improved back adjustment, for added comfort and body support
4. Two-speed fresh-air blower
5. All trim components chrome-plated
6. Automatic stick shift (option) discontinued

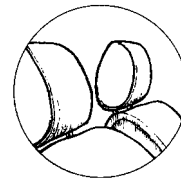


**1977**

**Chassis Numbers:**

117 2 000 001–

117 2 101 292



**1977 Beetle Convertible Chassis Numbers: 157 2 000 001–  
157 2 101 292**

1. Adjustable headrest replaces integrated headrest
2. Plush velour upholstery replaces houndstooth check
3. Electrically heated rear window (Beetle Convertible)
4. Bahama Blue Metallic paint replaces Topaz Metallic

**1978****Chassis Numbers:****158 2 000 001–**

1. Air cooled, rear-mounted, fuel-injection engine
2. Four-wheel independent suspension
3. Rack-and-pinion steering
4. 48 hp (SAE Net), at 4,200 rpm
5. Body hand-crafted by Karmann, custom coach builders since turn of the century
6. Top, well-padded with hardware concealed by tailored lining
7. Adjustable headrests
8. Electrically heated rear window
9. Convertible available in Chrome Yellow, Barrier Blue, Mars Red and Alpine White

### LOCATING CHASSIS NUMBERS

Effective with the 1970 model year, all VWs have 10-digit serial numbers in compliance with federal regulations. The first two digits of the serial number signify the model; the third is the last numeral of the model year; and the fourth to tenth digits indicate the consecutive production number within each type.

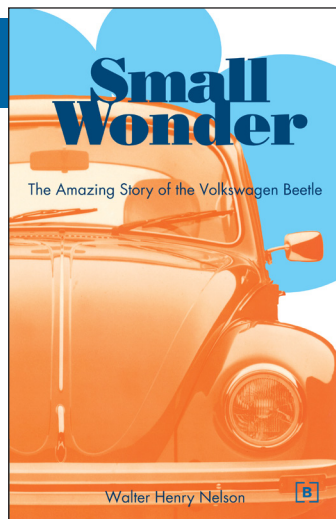
Chassis numbers are located (1) under the back seat, stamped on the frame tunnel, (2) on the chassis identification plate, and (3) on all vehicles produced since January 1, 1969, on a vehicle identification plate fastened to the dashboard near the lower left hand corner of the windshield.

On 1965 through 1969 models, a 9-digit chassis number was used (one more digit was added where production passed one million). These numbers start with the first two digits of the model number; the third digit designates the model year. The remaining digits comprise the production numbers. All models prior to 1965 feature a seven-digit chassis number.

1971 and 1972 Beetles and larger Type 113 models were numbered in the same series. In 1973, the first three digits for the Beetle were 113,

while the Type 113's were 133. 1974 Beetle chassis numbers began with 114 as the first three digits, while Type 113 started with 134. For 1975, Beetle chassis numbers were from 115 2000 001 through 115 226 7815. For 1975 Type 113, the Beetle's chassis numbers were 135 2000 001 through 135 226 7815. 1975 VW Convertible series numbers were 155 2000 001 through 155 2266 824. For 1976, the standard Beetle's serial numbers were 116 2000 001 through 116 2176 287. The VW Convertible's serial numbers for 1976 were 156 2000 001 through 156 2175 675. For 1977, the Beetle's serial chassis numbers were 117 2 000 001 through 117 2 101 292; the Convertible's were 157 2 000 001 through 157 2 101 292. For 1978, the Convertible's numbers begin 158 2 000 001. The Beetle is discontinued, except for limited production in Mexico through the early 1990s.





**BentleyPublishers**  
 .com

## Small Wonder The Amazing Story of the Volkswagen Beetle

by **Walter Henry Nelson**

Price: \$24.95

Bentley Stock Number: GVSW

Publication Date: 1998.06.01

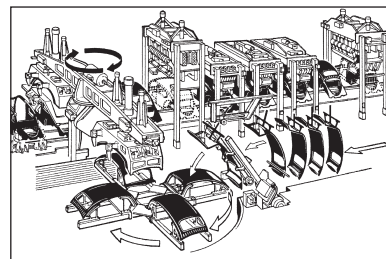
ISBN: 978-0-8376-0147-2

Softcover, 5-1/2" x 8-1/2"

Case quantity: 1

380 pages, 36 photos and illustrations

A highly-detailed account of the development and subsequent success of the Beetle, including much behind-the-scenes information. Originally published in 1970, **Small Wonder** focuses on the history of Volkswagen from its inception to 1970. With this edition, the author wrote a new introduction which helps the reader to understand the relevance of the book to our times, in light of the release of the New Beetle. Also new to this edition are expanded appendices including retail information for all Volkswagen models through 1997 and an updated how-to-tell-the age of your Beetle chart.



Over 1.2 million paperback copies were sold when originally released, making **Small Wonder** the most successful Beetle book of all time. Often quoted as a reference source by subsequent histories, **Small Wonder** provided valuable insights and inside information gleaned from years of research within Volkswagen. Not only is the history of Volkswagen portrayed, but also that of the personalities that helped shape the direction of the company and of the Beetle itself.



### Features:

- At the time of writing, the author had full access to Volkswagen archives in Germany and the U.S.
- Detailed profile of Heinz Nordhoff, the man most responsible for the worldwide success of Volkswagen in the '50s, '60s, and '70s
- The complete story of how the Beetle overtook the U.S. market
- How advertising played a role, including the behind-the-scenes story of VW's ad agency at the time, DDB (Doyle Dane Bernbach) and their classic "Think Small" campaign
- New section on "How to identify the year of a Beetle," and a detailed look at the assembly process

### Table of Contents:

1. The Years of Preparation
2. Hitler and The Changed Atmosphere
3. The Nazis Lay Their Plans
4. The War Years
5. Years of Improvisation
6. Nordhoff and The New Beginning
7. The Years of Fulfillment
8. Coals to Newcastle
9. Detroit Meets The Beetles
10. A Matter of Taste
11. Volkslore
12. From Wolfsburg with Love
13. Craftsmanship and The New Cars
14. Postscript 1970: Transition Toward Tomorrow